

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office
FLOOR DEBATE

March 31, 2004 LB 1090

Taxpayers Network. It's a little book comparing all 50 states with a multitude of different subjects. I find that Nebraska's residential public power rate rates ninth. We're not number one, but we're number nine. The average residential...excuse me, this is for per 2 million BTUs. We're number nine at \$19.13. That's residential. Commercial, we're also number nine in the ratings. And that rate is \$16.27; \$19 for residential, \$16 for commercial. Typically, business rates or commercial rates are higher than residential rates. They are on all other utilities, and I suspect they are on power as well. When you look at this comparison, what's unsaid, I believe, is that high users, the highest users of power, negotiate their rates. So they are significantly less than...if you're a very high user, your rate is significantly less than the small business and residential as well. I propose that if AM3474 is implemented, much of the burden proportionately will be paid by low-income residential customers and small business, and I just don't think that that's fair. And I think Senator Schimek brought that up earlier. Now I'm not opposed to surcharges on power. Some are okay and some are not. But this is neither the time nor the tax that I believe we ought to consider. I also believe we need to be prepared for the judgment or the negotiation out of the Boyd County lawsuit. But again, this vehicle isn't the one I would look at. Additionally, I'm not...I can't support Senator Hartnett's amendment either. Back to statistics. And by the way, Senator Hartnett's proposal is to increase income tax. If I were to go back to the same statistics, as an example, the median family income--this is in 2001--median family income in Nebraska is about \$48,000-\$49,000. We rank 26th, kind of right in the middle. Our per capita personal income--that's individual income--is \$29,700, 23rd in the country. Again, right in the middle. Conversely, if we take our state and local tax burden, state and local tax burden as a percent of our income, we bounce up to number thirteen. So we're climbing the ladder. Now this is the one that gets me. If we're looking at increasing income tax in Nebraska, I don't care at what level, what bracket you want to increase,...

SENATOR CUDABACK: One minute.

SENATOR MINES: ...if you look at resident...or excuse me,